Gruinart, east shore near Killinallan, NR303714, 28 July 2011. Adults common on upper beach of sea loch with patchy saltmarsh.

No records of saldid bugs from Islay are shown on the NBN maps. *Salda littoralis* and *Saldula saltatoria* are the commonest species in their respective genera and their presence on Islay is not unexpected. On the basis of comments in Dolling (1983), it appears that *Chartoscirta cincta* and *Saldula palustris* are new to the Islay fauna.

**Hymenoptera**

*Bombus pratorum*: Kinnabus, NR298426, 25 July 2011. A single male collected in flowery meadow. This common bumblebee has apparently not been recorded from Islay before, although there is a record from the neighbouring island of Jura.

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# Continuing decline of the grey squirrel population on Loch Lomondside

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An increasing scarcity of the hitherto well established North American grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* in the woodlands of east Loch Lomondside first drew my attention during the late 1990s. The suspected cause of this decline is potentially the result of population expansion into the area by predatory pine marten *Martes martes* (Mitchell, 2001). That pine marten are capable of successfully pursuing grey squirrel through the tree canopy to affect a kill was witnessed by a gamekeeper on the Buchanan Castle Estate in early April 2004 (Mitchell, 2005). Further observations in the same area showed that by the beginning of 2012 the grey squirrel, once familiar at bird feeding tables, was no longer observed in gardens in the village of Drymen. Additionally, there were several sightings of pine martens in this area during the previous months.

Less information is available regarding any change in the population status of grey squirrels elsewhere on Loch Lomondside. An exception to this is the ever popular Balloch Park, situated on the loch's southern basin, where grey squirrels have always been relatively easy to observe. During the course of a short walk, a dozen or more individuals could until recently be seen foraging on the grass lawns. By the spring of 2012, however, a visitor to the park would have been lucky to come across more than one or two grey squirrels.

Several factors may be involved in the Balloch Park grey squirrels' fall in numbers; one being disturbance from tree-felling that had taken place in order to contain an outbreak of a conifer disease. Secondly, there were unverified reports of the systematic culling of nuisance grey squirrels by local residents whose gardens adjoin the park (Lewis Pate, *pers. comm.*). Finally, there remains the possibility of predation by pine martens within Balloch Park. Their presence within this park was confirmed in September 2010 when a single pine marten was live-trapped and released at an adjacent farm (*Lennox Herald* 1/10/2010).

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# The bizarre Eustigmatacean alga, *Pseudostaurastrum limneticum* (Borge) Chodat, in a shallow, nutrient-enriched Scottish loch: new to the British Isles

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The yellow-green alga *Pseudostaurastrum* is a unicellular genus belonging to the phylum of Eustigmatophyta, formerly transferred from the Xanthophyta by Schnepf *et al.* (1996). Recently, the phylogenetic position of *Pseudostaurastrum* was investigated using 18S rRNA gene sequences and it was confirmed that *P. limneticum* and *P. enorme* form a sister branch to other Eustigmatophyceans included in the study (Hegewald *et al.*, 2007; Přibyl *et al.*, 2012).

Freshwater phytoplankton communities are important indicators of the bio-integrity of standing waters and are, therefore, used by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to assess the ecological status of more than 80 freshwater lochs in Scotland. Phytoplankton samples are collected at varying frequencies, but at a minimum are taken three times a year between July and September. Sub-samples of phytoplankton (preserved in Lugol's iodine) are examined using an inverted microscope and analysed according to standard procedures, with counts of approximately 400 individuals being routinely conducted (Brierley *et al.*, 2007; CEN, 2004 & 2008). These data not only provide a means of monitoring water quality across Scotland, but also provide information on species distributions, including rare or previously unrecorded species, at the local to national level.

*Pseudostaurastrum limneticum* (Borge) Chodat occurred sparsely (1 – 2 cells per 10 ml sub-sample) in phytoplankton samples collected from Loch Flemington during the spring and summer months of 2011 and 2012. This comprises the first known record of *P. limneticum* in the U.K. (D. John, *pers. comm.*). Previously, *P. enorme* (Ralfs) Chodat and *P. hastatum* (Reinsch) Chodat were the only two species of *Pseudostaurastrum* recorded from freshwater habitats in Great Britain (Johnson, 2011).

Loch Flemington is located in Nairnshire, around 12 miles east of Inverness, Scotland (NGR: NH 81026 52040). It is a small lake (0.15 km$^2$ area), with a shallow mean depth (0.75 m), and is a high alkalinity (annual mean 63.9 mg L$^{-1}$ as $CaCO_3$ over 2011-12), meso-eutrophic [annual mean total phosphorus (TP) concentration 39.4 µg L$^{-1}$ over 2011-12] water body. Due to a long-standing history of potentially toxic cyanobacteria or 'blue-green algae' blooms associated with high phosphorus concentrations, Loch Flemington was subject to a novel lake management approach involving the application (March 2010) of the phosphorus-binding agent, Phoslock®, with the primary goal of improving water quality conditions (Meis *et al.*, 2013). Monitoring of this ecosystem scale experiment continues and includes responses in the phytoplankton community to manipulation of the internal phosphorus load (Lang *et al.*, *unpub. data*). SEPA holds stakeholder interest in the ecological recovery of Loch Flemington, and in collaboration with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology supports a 'citizen's science' monitoring scheme with local stakeholders to closely monitor water quality through analysis of monthly phytoplankton samples and water chemistry.

*Pseudostaurastrum limneticum* (Fig. 1*a*, *b*) ranges in diameter from 20 – 25 µm, and this bizarre alga can be plate-like, tetrahedral or polyhedral in shape, with cell corners projecting into branches or 'arms' (Schnepf *et al.*, 1996). Morphologically, *P. limneticum* lies in the spectrum between the stout, highly-branched body of *P. enorme* (Fig. 1*c*), and the slender, tapering form of *P. hastatum* (Fig. 1*d*). Though *P. limneticum* has been documented worldwide (www.algaebase.org), more specifically this species was found in a small eutrophic lake in